

Andy Birkey, *Minnesota Independent*

The U.S. Senate passed a repeal of the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy on Saturday, paving the way for gay, lesbian and bisexual servicemembers to serve openly in the armed forces. Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken were among the 65 Senators voting to repeal the measure.

"Today we've cleared the pathway to right a major injustice," Franken said in a statement following the vote. "The American people are ready to end this law, the military is ready to end it, and above all it's just the right thing to do."

Klobuchar added, "Today a bipartisan group of Senators stood up with our military leaders to repeal the 1993 Don't Ask, Don't Tell Policy."

Eight Republicans joined the Democrats to pass the bill: Sens. Richard Burr of North Carolina, Scott Brown of Massachusetts, Susan Collins of Maine, John Ensign of Nevada, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Olympia Snowe of Maine, and George Voinovich of Ohio.

The Log Cabin Republicans of Minnesota praised the move and said once the bill is signed, "Our fine GLBT men and women, who have been unjustly discharged will celebrate this victory with the right to change their discharge status and seek the benefits rightfully owed to them for the service they so courageously provided to their country."

The U.S. House passed the bill earlier in the week, with Reps. Tim Walz, Keith Ellison, Betty McCollum and James Oberstar voting in support of the bill.

The repeal now heads to President Obama's desk for signature. Obama, who will likely sign the bill this week, said in a statement on Saturday, "It is time to close this chapter in our history. It is time to recognize that sacrifice, valor and integrity are no more defined by sexual orientation than they are by race or gender, religion or creed. It is time to allow gay and lesbian Americans to serve their country openly. I urge the Senate to send this bill to my desk so that I can sign it into law."

Until the bill is signed and a timetable for repeal is set, lesbian, gay and bisexual soldiers can

still face discharge under the law.